

0012

**From:** Ingrid Wieser  
**To:** OGMCOAL  
**Date:** 5/13/2009 8:00 AM  
**Subject:** NRCS Guidelines for Range assessment  
**Place:** OGMCOAL

*Incoming*  
*5/15/2009*  
*#3273*  
*Q*

Hello-

Can you please scan this to the CTS for task # 3273 and title it "NRCS guidelines for range assessments" Thank you!

>>> "Stacy, Dean - Price, UT" <[dean.stacy@ut.usda.gov](mailto:dean.stacy@ut.usda.gov)> 5/6/2009 2:04 PM >>>  
Good afternoon Ms Wieser,

I could imagine that things may be outdated, so thank you for contacting us so we can make sure we are conducting the analysis as it is suppose to be conducted.

In the past I went out with a tenured Range Management Specialist to conduct site visits such as the one at the old Wilburg Mine, and have conducted numerous visits since then. This is however the first time I was asked to conduct a visit on a reference site. Never the less the protocol should be the same. Since my initial training with the Agency doing assessments such as this a multi-agency Technical Reference was developed to help determine rangeland condition. Here <[ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/GLTI/technical/publications/IIRH\\_v4\\_8-15-05.pdf](ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/GLTI/technical/publications/IIRH_v4_8-15-05.pdf)> is the link. In case it does not work it is entitled "Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health, Technical Reference 1734-6, Version 4-2005. As I hope you will see this document helps guide you through a fairly intensive qualitative analysis when determining rangeland condition, taking in account soil/site stability, hydrologic function, and biotic integrity. When you run through the analysis you are actually determining how far the site has "departed from the expected condition" of a site (i.e. a undisturbed reference condition). When I ran through the analysis for the P/J reference area I determined that the site has not departed from the expected condition very much if any (overall, taking into account the three parameters listed above).

I hope this can answer any question you may have regarding the procedure I used for Energy West. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding my explanation. If this is not the route DOGM would like to take in the future, I am sure the NRCS would be more than happy to re-visit this topic as we would like to provide valuable and technically accurate product to the individuals or entities we work with.

Again, please feel free to contact me at anytime.

Sincerely,

M. Dean Stacy  
Area Range Management Specialist  
USDA-NRCS  
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-----Original Message-----

From: Ingrid Wieser [ <<mailto:ingridwieser@utah.gov>>  
<mailto:ingridwieser@utah.gov>]  
Sent: Wednesday, May 06, 2009 1:40 PM  
To: Stacy, Dean - Price, UT  
Subject: Mr. Stacy-

Mr. Stacy-

I am a biologist with the Division of Oil, Gas and mining and I am reviewing an application that includes your assessment of a reference area, which I have attached. I had a couple of questions for you on how the NRCS conducts the site analysis. Our regulations, possibly a little outdated, state that "the range condition of the reference area should be determined according to the Soil Conservation Service Guidelines" and "Reference areas must be in fair or better range condition". In your assessment, you described the area as "good". I am guessing that the Soil Conservation Service Guidelines are a bit outdated since the SCS became NRCS, so I was wondering if you still used the same scale (fair, better etc) as these guidelines or if they have changed completely. Could you send me the current guidelines that are used to assess site conditions? I need to make a determination that the site is in good enough condition to use as a reference area or if some other level should be set for a standard. I hope this all makes sense, please feel free to call me if you have questions. Thank you!

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